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Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management

Thirteenth meeting*

Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment

Fourteenth meeting*

Geneva, 28–30 May 2018
Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda
The global Convention — promotion and partnership: strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level

Draft decision on the designation and responsibilities of focal points

Prepared by the Bureau with the support of the secretariat

Summary

National focal points play a critical role in the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), like they do for other multilateral environmental agreements, as they represent the main channel of communication between the secretariat, the concerned country and other countries on Convention-related matters.

While some countries have officially nominated one or more focal points under the Convention, the majority have not done so. Moreover, changes regarding focal points and their contact information are not systematically communicated to the secretariat. Finally, as there is no official document under the Convention defining the terms of reference of focal

* Second joint meeting of the two working groups.

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points, there is a lack of clarity on their role and responsibilities.

With the recent globalization of the Convention and the broadening of its work, efficient and reliable channels of communication with both Parties and non-Parties and clear responsibilities at the national level are more crucial than ever to support implementation of the Convention.

Therefore, at its twelfth meeting (Geneva, 5–6 July 2017), the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management requested the Bureau to prepare a draft decision on focal points, pursuant to the Working Group's mandate to take initiatives to strengthen the application of the Convention, including the preparation of draft decisions for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention (see ECE/MP.WAT/15/Add.1, annex IV, para. 3).

The present draft decision aims at formalizing the process of nomination of focal points under the Convention and defining their key responsibilities.

The draft decision is submitted to the second joint session of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment. Those bodies are invited to review the draft decision, provide comments, and entrust the Bureau to finalize it for submission to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration and adoption at its eighth session (Astana, 10–12 October 2018).

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes,

Stressing the key role of focal points in promoting and implementing the Convention, as also outlined in the strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level (ECE/MP.WAT/[x]/Add.[x]),[1]

Recognizing the need to define the role and responsibilities of focal points and to ensure their official designation,

1. *Requests* Parties to officially designate one or more national focal points for the Convention by 31 January 2019, or within three months from becoming a Party, through an official communication to the secretariat;

2. *Encourages* non-Parties to also officially designate one or more national focal points for the Convention by 31 January 2019 through an official communication to the secretariat;

3. *Requests* Parties and non-Parties that have nominated more than one focal point to provide details of the different competencies of their focal points;

4. *Also requests* Parties and non-Parties to inform the secretariat without delay about any change regarding the designated focal points;

5. *Requests* the secretariat to maintain a directory of contact details of national focal points on the Convention's website to facilitate the sharing of information;

6. *Agrees* that the main responsibilities of focal points are to:

(a) Actively promote the objectives and implementation of the Convention, its tools and its programme of work;

(b) Serve as a channel for all communications with the secretariat and other countries on Convention-related matters;

(c) Receive notifications of meetings, activities and other information related to the Convention and disseminate such information to other relevant national authorities, organizations and the general public, as appropriate;

(d) Facilitate regular and active involvement in the activities under the Convention, including by ensuring the coordination of relevant national institutions and the nomination of national experts and delegates for workshops and intergovernmental meetings under the Convention;

(e) Ensure, through the appropriate consultative process, the preparation and submission of national reports under the Convention, and facilitate the preparation and submission of national report on Sustainable Development Goal global indicator 6.5.2 on transboundary water cooperation;

(f) Follow up on secretariat requests, including requests for information and inputs based on decisions by the Meeting of the Parties or the Convention's subsidiary bodies;

(g) Disseminate information on the implementation of the Convention and other relevant national developments in the framework of the Convention's meetings and those of other relevant national and international forums;

[1] Reference to report of the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to be included here.

(h) Facilitate possible voluntary contributions to the Convention's trust fund;

(i) Respond to information requests from the public on matters related to the Convention, as appropriate;

(j) Carry out any other relevant task to support implementation of the Convention or as decided by the Meeting of the Parties;

7. *Calls on* Parties and non-Parties involved in the Convention's activities to make appropriate internal arrangements so that the nominated focal points can perform the required tasks;

8. *Requests* the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management to regularly organize sessions where focal points are invited to report on their efforts to promote the Convention and exchange experiences and lessons learned.